

# Analytical Tool: Gauging Perceptions of and Experiences with Violent Crime in South Sudan

BRIEFING PAPER

Intersections of Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in South Sudan

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## Introduction

This briefing paper presents an analytical toolbox that can be used to collect data on people's perceptions of and experiences with violent crime. It is derived from a household survey conducted as part of the research project "Intersections of truth, justice and reconciliation in South Sudan".<sup>1</sup> The toolbox consists of this briefing paper and an xls-file with a questionnaire.<sup>2</sup> This briefing paper provides additional information on the questionnaire, the training of enumerators and Kobo Toolbox, the open source data collection tool used for this survey. The file with the questionnaire can be imported into Kobo Toolbox and can be adjusted for use in different contexts, locations or projects with a similar focus.

## The project

The survey from which this analytical tool is adapted resulted in two reports: *Access to Justice: Perceptions of and Experiences with Violent Crime in South Sudan* (Willems & Deng, 2016) and *Perceptions of Transitional Justice in South Sudan* (Deng & Willems, 2016).<sup>3</sup> In total 1,912 respondents were interviewed for the survey in November and early December 2015. The survey was conducted in four locations: Juba town, Juba Protection of Civilian site (POC<sup>4</sup>), Wau town and Bentiu POC. A pilot survey of 163 respondents was conducted in Juba in April 2015, with the primary goal of verifying the relevance and logic of the questions asked, and whether respondents understand the questions in the way we intended.<sup>5</sup> Based on the experiences of the pilot the questionnaire was then revised and prepared for the survey in November.

The survey was conducted on smartphones using KoBoToolbox, an open source survey tool developed for data collection in challenging environments.<sup>6</sup> In each

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<sup>1</sup> The project is carried out in cooperation between the University for Peace (UPEACE) Centre The Hague (the Netherlands), the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS), and PAX. It is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a part of the 'Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law', and is administered by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). A short summary of the project, its methods and activities, can be found here:

<http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/publications/One%20Pager%20-%20IJR%20in%20South%20Sudan.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The xls-file can be downloaded here:

[http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/downloadsprojecten/Household\\_survey\\_violent\\_crimes.xls](http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/downloadsprojecten/Household_survey_violent_crimes.xls)

<sup>3</sup> Willems & Deng (2016) *Access to Justice: Perceptions of and Experiences with Violent Crime in South Sudan*. Available at: <http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/downloadsprojecten/Access-to-Justice-in-South-Sudan---Final-Report.pdf>

Deng & Willems (2016) *Perceptions of Transitional Justice in South Sudan*. Available at:

<http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/downloadsprojecten/Perceptions-of-Transitional-Justice-in-South-Sudan---Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The UN is currently operating six POC sites including UN House Juba POCs 1 and 3, Bor POC, Malakal POC, Bentiu POC, Melut POC and Wau POC. More than two hundred thousand South Sudanese are currently seeking refuge in these POCs.

<sup>5</sup> For findings of the pilot, see Willems and Deng (2015) *Justice and Conflict in South Sudan. Observations from a pilot survey*.

[http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/hipe\\_content/Justice%20and%20Conflict%20in%20South%20Sudan%20-%20Pilot%20Survey%20-%20Briefing%20Paper.pdf](http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/hipe_content/Justice%20and%20Conflict%20in%20South%20Sudan%20-%20Pilot%20Survey%20-%20Briefing%20Paper.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.kobotoolbox.org/>

location a group of eight enumerators conducted the survey. Prior to the survey they received a two or three-day training, depending on whether they had prior experience with the KoBoToolbox application. Enumerators received training on the use of the KoBoToolbox application, and each question was elaborately discussed to ensure enumerators understood the questions. The questionnaire was developed in English, and during the training focus was also placed on finding agreement among enumerators on the translation of terms in local languages. Enumerators were monitored during the data collection by assigned supervisors in the field, as well as online by the project leaders through the monitoring tools provided by the KoboToolbox application.

## Kobo Toolbox

KoBoToolbox,<sup>7</sup> developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, is an open source suite of tools built for data collection and analysis in humanitarian emergencies and other challenging environments. The toolbox has been adapted for humanitarian use by OCHA, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Kobo Toolbox allows users to build a survey from scratch, or import an existing survey.<sup>8</sup> Using a free app, mobile phones (smartphones only) or tablets can be used as data collection tools. Surveys can be entered on the phone, and are sent directly to the project account where data can instantly be analyzed.

The use of Kobo Toolbox provides considerable advantages over the use of surveys on printed paper. Advantages include:

- Surveys do not need to be printed and transported, and surveys can be sent directly to the phones of enumerators, or enumerators can be handed temporary phones for data collection. In most environments this is cheaper than printing thousands of multi-page surveys.
- Data does not need to be transcribed and can immediately analyzed after collection is complete. This is much cheaper, and it also eliminates transcription errors.
- Enumeration errors are minimized through automatized skip-logic and making answers mandatory before the next question is opened. This ensures enumerators ask all questions, and do not ask unnecessary questions.
- Data can be collected offline on simple mobile phones and data can be transferred to the online platform at a later stage.
- The data is secure, and for surveys collecting sensitive data settings in the Kobo Collect app can be adjusted so the files are only accessible by the project manager.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.kobotoolbox.org/>

<sup>8</sup> To download the survey discussed in this brief, follow this link: [http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/downloadsprojecten/Household\\_survey\\_violent\\_crimes.xls](http://www.upeace.nl/cp/uploads/downloadsprojecten/Household_survey_violent_crimes.xls). The survey is ready to be imported and adjusted to the context for renewed use.

## Contents of the Questionnaire

The project's point of departure was the interconnectedness of transitional justice and reconciliation and justice in everyday life. The survey used for the project therefore focused on people's perceptions of and experiences with the conflict in South Sudan, as well as justice and crime in everyday life.

The first set of questions were concerned with the conflict that erupted in December 2013, and looked at people's understanding of the conflict, possible solutions, and perspectives on transitional justice and reconciliation in relation to the agreements and institutions that were at that stage on the table. As the relevance of these questions was subject to the situation at the time the survey was conducted and these questions are therefore not re-usable, this part of the survey is not included in the analytical tool presented in this paper.

The analytical tool presented is particularly focused on people's perceptions and experiences with justice in daily life. Questions focused on both hypothetical cases, as well as on actual experiences.

The first set of questions aims to collect general household characteristics, such as location, size of the household, level of education and source of income.

This second set of questions looks at people's perceptions and preferences regarding violent crimes in South Sudan. The survey focuses on seven types of violent crime: cattle raiding, armed robbery, physical assault, murder, sexual assault, abduction and torture. For each of these crimes, respondents are asked a hypothetical question about what their course of action would be if a member of their household were confronted with these crimes. For example, respondents are asked: "If someone from your household is murdered, what action would you take first to deal with the case?" A follow-up question then asks for what would be a logical second step. Respondents are not presented with a set of possible answers, but are asked freely about the course of action they would pursue. The answers given therefore also include actors that traditionally may not be considered justice or security actors. Respondents are also asked what they considered appropriate remedy or solution in case of the crimes listed above, and what could be done to improve the justice system.

The third part of the survey investigates people's actual experiences with violent crimes. The survey asks respondents whether someone within their household had experienced any of the following crimes within the last five years: cattle raiding, armed robbery, physical assault, murder, sexual assault, abduction and torture. For each crime that a household member has experienced, a number of follow-up



questions were asked about the details of the particular crime and the steps taken in response.<sup>9</sup>

## Training enumerators

As with any (household) survey, enumerators should receive a thorough training to ensure they are familiar with the questions and survey techniques involved. The enumerator has a central position in the survey, as they are the ones who gather the data from the respondents, and the success of the survey depends on the quality of the enumerator's work. Responsibilities of the enumerator include:

- Locating the household
- Identifying eligible respondent in the household
- Interviewing the respondent
- Reporting to the field supervisor throughout the work

While the use of Kobo Toolbox saves considerable time and resources throughout the project, it does require additional attention during enumerator training (particularly when enumerators themselves may not own a smartphone). This briefing paper therefore provides a short outline for a training to prepare enumerators for data collection in the field. The training

## Training on conducting interviews

### ***Safety and necessary approvals to conduct the survey***

Ensure (if relevant) that all necessary approvals are present and relevant authorities are informed, inform enumerators about what has been done and ensure field supervisors carry copies of letters of approval.

### ***Making first contact***

- Building rapport is essential to the interview process
- Make a good first impression
- Be friendly and humble, do your best to make respondents feel at ease
- Be aware of your body language, tone of your voice, etc.
- Make eye-contact.
- Sensitization of the phone: explain the phone is a tool.
- Answer any questions and any address concerns the respondent may have
- Use the local language when possible

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<sup>9</sup> If a respondent said that the household experienced one particular form of violent crime more than once in the last five years (e.g. multiple armed robberies), the respondent is asked to answer the questions that followed for the incident that he or she considered to be the most significant. It is assumed that what the respondent considered the most significant would be the incident for which he or she could recall the most detailed information, and for which it would be most likely that the household took actions in response.

### ***Introduction of enumerator and the project***

- Ask for consent
  - You must always have consent for every interview you conduct.
  - Read the statement on the phone exactly as written
- Confirm availability
  - Be sure to confirm the availability of the respondent for 15-30 minutes
  - If the respondent is not available, select the next respondent according to the selection method
- Always have a positive approach
  - Never adopt an apologetic manner. Do not use words such as “Are you too busy?”
  - Emphasize how important their participation and opinions are to our study. Emphasize the fact that our study is especially interested in the opinions and experiences of South Sudanese citizens.
- Stress confidentiality of responses
  - If the respondent is hesitant about responding to the interview or asks what the data will be used for, explain that the information you collect will remain confidential. No individual names will be used for any purpose, and all information will be grouped together to write a report.
- Answer any questions from the respondent frankly
  - Be direct and pleasant when you answer.
- Establish privacy
  - The presence of a third person during an interview can prevent you from getting frank, honest answers from a respondent. It is very important that the individual interview be conducted privately and that all questions be answered by the respondent.
  - If other people are present, explain to the respondent that some of the questions are private and ask to interview the person in the best place for talking alone. Sometimes asking for privacy will make others more curious, so they will want to listen; you will have to be creative. Establishing privacy from the beginning will allow the respondent to be more attentive to your questions.

### ***Asking questions***

- Ask each question exactly as it is written
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Repeat the question if necessary
  - If you have to explain the question, be very careful that you do not alter the meaning of the question
  - Only probe when it is necessary, but do not hint at answers
- Be neutral throughout the interview

- Most people are polite and will tend to give answers that they think you want to hear. It is therefore very important that you remain absolutely neutral as you ask the questions.
  - Do not make any comments or facial expressions showing you agree or disagree
- Do not probe for more details if you already have sufficient information to answer the question
- Never suggest answers to the respondent
  - If a respondent's answer is not relevant to a question, do not prompt her by saying something like "I suppose you mean that... Is that right?"
  - Unless otherwise indicated in the questionnaires, you should not read out the list of coded answers to the respondent, even if he or she has trouble answering.
- Handle hesitant respondents tactfully
  - There will be situations where the respondents simply say, "I don't know," give an irrelevant answer, act very bored or detached, or contradict something they have already said. In these cases, you should try to re-interest them in the conversation.
  - If the respondent is giving irrelevant or elaborate answers, do not stop them abruptly or rudely, but listen to what they have to say. Then try to steer them gently back to the original question. Explain that you have to follow the format of the form, but that their issues may be addressed later. If not, they can always give you more explanations at the end of the interview.
  - If the respondent refuses to answer a question, indicate that there is "No response" for that question and move on to the next question as though nothing happened.
- Do not form expectations
  - You must not form expectations of the ability and knowledge of the respondent. For example, do not assume women and men from rural areas or those who are less educated or illiterate do not have valid opinions about different issues.
  - You should never complete an answer for a respondent. Even if you think the respondent has already answered the question you are about to ask, you must ask them the question and let them respond.
- Do not hurry the interview
  - Ask the questions slowly to ensure the respondent understands what is being asked. After you have asked a question, pause and give the respondent time to think. If the respondent feels hurried or is not allowed to formulate their own opinion they may respond with "I don't know" or give an inaccurate answer.
  - If you feel the respondent is answering without thinking just to speed up the interview, say to the respondent, "There is no hurry. Your opinion is very important, so consider your answers carefully."



### Training on smart phones

- Use of the phone
- How to save battery (closing applications)
- Other applications needed (calling supervisor in case of emergency)

### Training on Kobo App

- Starting a survey
- Recognizing different types of questions
- Filling answers
- Correcting mistakes
- Finalizing a survey
- Trouble shooting: what if a wrong button was pressed.

### Training on random selection

For this survey individual households were selected using a detailed random walk technique with a built-in skip pattern. Enumerators randomly selected the oldest or youngest man or woman present according to a preset randomized table. Due to the highly sensitive and gendered nature of some questions, male enumerators only interviewed male respondents and female enumerators only interviewed female respondents. Eligible respondents had to be 18 years of age or older and South Sudanese nationals. Training on random selection needs to cover:

- General use of random walk technique
- Trouble shooting: what to do if random walk technique brings you out of town or survey area, individual presented by the randomized table cannot be located, if the household head insists youngest person cannot be interviewed, etc.

### Familiarization with survey questions

It is important that all enumerators understand the questions. In case enumerators are responsible for the translation into a local language, enumerators also have to agree on the translation of concepts and terms. The training should therefore include a thorough discussion of each question in the survey.

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